DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 184 688 PS 011 328

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TITLE Adolescent Characteristics Influencing Parental Power Perceptions in the Family.
PUB DATE Mar 80
NOTE 33p.; Filmed from best available copy; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Sociological Society (Knoxville, TN, March 28, 1980)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; Age Differences; Birth Order; College Students; Family Relationship; Higher Education; High School Students; *Parent Role; Power Structure; *Religious Differences; *Role Perception; Secondary Education; *Sex Differences

ABSTRACT

The influence of the sex, grade, religiosity and birth order of adolescents on adolescents perceptions of the parental power structure in the family was examined in this study. Parental Power was conceptualized as a multidimensional variable following the French and Raven (1959) formulation of social power bases. The parental power dimensions measured were perceived outcome-control, referent, legitimate and expert power. A modified version of Smith's parental power instrument was given to subsamples taken from a larger pool of high-school and college adolescent respondents, yielding 458 questionnaires (231 females, 227 males). Multiple regression was utilized to examine the relative influence of these adolescent variables on the differing parental power dimensions for each parent. Adolescents' sex and religiosity were found to be the most important determinant variables. Female adolescents consistently perceived the mother as having more power than did male adolescents, with both sexes viewing power of the father similarly. Consequently, females saw the parental power structure as more equalitarian than did males. Religiosity, used as an indicator of traditionalism, was consistently found to be positively associated with parental power perceptions for both sexes, with the exception of parents' outcome-control power. (Author/SS)

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# ADOLESCENT CHARACTERISTICS INFLUENCING PARENTAL POWER PERCEPTIONS IN THE FAMILY*

by

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PS011328

*Paper presented in The Life Course: Childhood and Youth session of the Southern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Knoxville, Tennessee, March 28, 1980. My thanks to Susan Hesselbart and Becky Neely for assistance on the data analysis for this paper.

Adolescent Characteristics Influencing Parental Power Perceptions in the Family


## ABSTRACT

A number of adolescent characteristics are examined in determining their impact on adolescent perceptions of the parental power structure in the family. The variables include adolescent's sex, grade, religiosity and birth order. This research explored these relationships by using "parental power" as a multidimensional variable following the French and Raven (1959) formulation of social power bases. The parental power concept includes perceived outcome-control, referent, legitimate and expert power. Purposive subsamples were taken from a larger pool of high-school and college adolescent respondents, yielding 458 questionnaires (231 males, 227 females). Multiple regression was utilized to examine the relative influence of these adolescent variables on the differing parental power dimensions for each parent. Adolescent's sex and religiousity were systematically evidenced as the most important determinant variables. Female adolescents consistently perceived the mother as having more power than did male adolescents, with both sexes viewing power of the father similarly. Consequently, females saw the parental power structure as more equalitarian than did males. Religiosity, used as an indicator of traditionalism, was consistently found to be positively associated with parental power perceptions for both sexes, with the exception of parents' outcome-control power. The findings are discussed in the paper for each of the parental power dimensions, and the implications of these findings for the socialization and personality development for male and female adolescents in the family are discussed.

## Adolescent Characteristics Influencing Parental Power Perceptions in the Family

Power processes in modern American families have received a considerable amount of research attention in the past two decades (Safilios-Rothschild, 1970; Cromwell and Olson, 1975; McDonald, 1977a). Blood and Wolfe's (1960) Detroit Area Survey served as an impetus for the study of a large number of variables relating to family power relationships. Most research has subsequently focused on husband-wife, or conjugal, power relationships in families, with a particular interest in the importance of resources, primarily economic in nature, and the cultural-normative definitions for determining conjugal power structure. Though most of this research has focused on husbands and wives as respondents, but more predominantly wives (Safilios-Rothschild, 1969), several studies have investigated children's, primarily adolescents', perceptions of the conjugal power structure. This approach has often been taken as an alternative to surveying husbands and wives in attempting to assess the power structure in the conjugal unit.

However, a significant body of research in this area of power has also developed viewing the family as a socialization environment for the rearing of offspring and focusing on the power structure in the family as a component of that socialization environment. Routinely, either conjugal power or parental power has been utilized as the major independent variable of study. These efforts have served to delineate the impact of

either the conjugal or parental power structure on offspring in the family in a variety of family interactional areas. Though sometimes confused in the literature, "conjugal power" and "parental power" are separate concepts, with parental power being a subcomponent of the broader conjugal power concept. Whereas conjugal power generally refers to all the power relationships between the husband and wife, parental power is only inclusive of father-mother relationships that involve the child in an attempt to influence or control the child's attitudes, opinions, and/or behavior (McDonald, 1977b).

This study is concerned with viewing the family as a socialization environment for offspring and, specifically, utilizes parental power as a dependent variable in attempting to locate those characteristics of adolescents which affect their perceptions of maternal and paternal power and the distribution of power in the parental unit. The major variables to be included are adolescent's sex, grade, religiosity and birth order.

Conceptualizing the family as a socialization environment, adolescent definitions of the locus of parental power play an important role in the development of attitudes regarding the normative power structure of contemporary families, and possibly impact upon his/her expectations of parental interaction and parent-child relationships when entering into later marriage and assuming the parent role. In addition, perceptions of parental power have been shown to be influential in the development of differential processes in such areas as parental influence (Smith, 1970), parental identification (Bowerman and Bahr, 1973; McDonald, 1977b), compliance to parental rules (Rollins and Thomas, 1975). As such, it is important to specify those adolescent factors which function to determine

their perceptions of the parental power structure.

A major problem of family power research is that power is often conceptualized and operationalized as a unidimensional phenomenon whereas the social power literature has long recognized that "power" is a complex, multidimensional concept encompassing a wide range of power domains. French and Raven (1959) systematically delineated five dimensions of social power. These dimensions of social power have been modified and applied specifically to the concept of parental power by Smith (1970) and McDonald (1977b). These dimensions inclusive of parent-adolescent relationships are: (1) parental outcome-control power - based on the ability of the parent to provide rewards and mediate punishment for the adolescent; (2) parental legitimate power - based on the adolescent's belief that the parent has the right to control his/her behavior or opinions; (3) parental referent power - based on the adolescent's established disposition to turn to the parent for guidance and advice; and (4) parental expert power - based on the adolescent's perceptions of superior knowledge, skill and competence of the parent.

McDonald (forthcoming) has recently used this social power model to examine those variables that influence adolescent perceptions of power in the parental unit including parental and family resources, as well as a number of family and adolescent characteristics. However, that study was concerned only with general parental power and utilized those differing power dimensions to provide a summation of the overall maternal and paternal power scores. The study also focused only on high-school age adolescents. In contrast, this study includes high-school and college age adolescents and is concerned with theoretically - and empirically - relevant adolescent

characteristics which possibly influence maternal and paternal power perceptions both generally and within each power dimension. It also examines how these characteristics influence the perceived distribution of parental power generally and for each power dimension.

## Adolescent Factors Affecting Parental Power Perceptions

### Sex

The question of sex differences of offspring in perception of parental power processes has generally played a subsidiary role to other variables in parental power research, though perceptual differences of males and females are often included in the presented data (see McDonald, 1977b and forthcoming, for instance). Sex differences regarding conjugal power perceptions of adolescents in the family have been investigated, however. Bahr, et al. (1974:358), for instance, found that "Sex is a factor: females are more likely to perceive their mothers as dominant, while males are more likely to see their fathers as dominant." In a five-culture analysis of adolescent perceptions of conjugal power, Buehler, et al. (1974:11-12) concluded that perhaps the most salient finding is the consistent sex difference in respondents' perceptions of conjugal power. In every cultural context examined in that study, male adolescents both attributed more power to the father than the mother, and scored father's power higher than did female respondents. Also, in every cultural context studied, females gave the mother more power than did males, and with one exception, females gave the mother more power than they gave father. Similar sex differences in adolescent perceptions of conjugal power had been documented earlier by Hess and Torney (1962) and Bowerman and Elder

(1964). These findings argue for the existence of a sex-linkage between same-sex parents and offspring regarding perceptions of the distribution of conjugal power in families.

The possible existence of a sex-linkage between same-sex parents and offspring in perceptions of parental power has important implications for sex-role development and the different "perceptual worlds" experienced by male and female adolescents in the family. Are perceptions of parental power patterned in a similar manner to the differential perceptions of conjugal power by male and female adolescents? If parental power is a subset of the broader phenomenon of conjugal power, it could be argued that this is probably the case. However, if few perceptual differences occur as a result of sex-similarity of adolescent and parent, other explanations appear necessary. An earlier study (McDonald, 1977b) does, in fact, indicate that such a sex-linked process may be only minimal, if existent at all. The tentative findings of that research indicate that both male and female adolescents view the parental power structure as basically equalitarian in nature, with differences by sex. However, the differences in maternal and paternal power perceptions of male and female adolescents, taken separately, were not systematically explored.

Grade

Both age and educational level of the adolescent could be argued to influence power perceptions of the mother and father. Age of adolescent has been demonstrated to be a significant variable in studies of conjugal power perceptions (Hess and Torney, 1962; Bahr, et al., 1974; Smith, 1977). Bahr, et al., found that older adolescents perceive their parents as less equalitarian than do younger ones, with a tendency to see

dominance in same-sex parents as age increases. Smith (1977:155) summarized existent research in stating that "...older offspring are more autonomous and independent from parents than younger offspring." However, he only found partial support for his hypothesis that age of the offspring, using grade as the empirical indicator, would be negatively related to perceptions of parental authority. McDonald (forthcoming) found no support for a similar hypothesis relating age of adolescent to perceptions of general maternal and paternal power. But, it could be that the adolescent age variable operates differentially across the various power dimensions.

Changes in adolescent parental power perceptions have not been investigated by educational level of the adolescent, but it would appear to be a potentially important variable. Educational gains of adolescents could be anticipated to have considerable impacts on power perceptions of parents, particularly perceived expert power. It is, of course, difficult to sort out the differential impacts of age and educational level on parental power perceptions. Statistically, the extremely high intercorrelations between the variables would be such as to make differential interpretations basically meaningless. Therefore, this research focuses on grade in school as the more significant variable for adolescent life-stage impacts on power perceptions of the mother and father.

Birth Order

Birth order has been a largely neglected variable in studies of parent-child relationships. However, the position of the adolescent among sibling appears a potentially important variable influencing parental power perceptions. It could be argued that the larger the number of

of older siblings, the larger the number of potential resourceful, or powerful, persons in the family as perceived by the adolescent. Older siblings could be perceived as being capable of providing more expertise and guidance in areas of concern to younger adolescents such as school and dating problems, peer and parental norms and expectations, etc. In addition, parental use of older siblings as "surrogate parents" with delegated authority over younger siblings possibly generates a dissemination of parental power processes and resultant perceptions of power relationships in the family. However, in two studies considering birth order and power variables, Smith (1977) found no relationship between birth order and perceptions of parental authority and McDonald (forthcoming) generated similar results for adolescent birth order and general parental power. The inclusion of this variable in the present study will hopefully clarify the significance of birth order in parental power research.

Religiosity

The variable of religiosity, or the degree of religious involvement, is often utilized as an indicator of the adherence to traditional values and beliefs. A traditionalistic orientation would be expected to influence adolescent perceptions of parental power as the adolescent's deference to parental dominance and respect for parental wishes, demands, advice, etc., may be largely shaped by such traditional or religious values. In McDonald's (forthcoming) recent study, religiosity was found to be important for determining how adolescents attribute power to parents. It was concluded that, "As predicted, adolescents indicating high religiosity tend to perceive both parents as having greater power than 'non-religious' adolescents. This supports the notion that religious commitment functions to reinforce perceptions of parental dominance. The data also indicate

that highly religious male adolescents perceive the father as having increased power relative to the mother. However, this relationship does not hold for female adolescents" (McDonald, forthcoming). These results indicate the necessity for considering the variable of religiosity more closely within each of the parental power dimensions and as it relates to adolescent's age, grade and birth order.

## Methodology

### Sample

The research questionnaire was administered during the spring of 1975 to 451 students in four large introductory sociology classes at a large urban western university and again in the spring of 1976 to all the high school students (N=440) in grades 9-12 in a small southern town (population approximately 8,000) who were attending school on the date of questionnaire administration. The 1975 college sample was drawn from large sections of introductory sociology under the assumption that broad cross-sections of freshmen and sophomores would be included.

From these samples, purposive subsamples were taken in order to obtain the specific subjects of interest in this study: high-school and college (freshmen and sophomore) adolescents who were no older than 20 years of age, unmarried, from intact families, and living at home. This procedure was necessary in order to ensure the adolescents' relative dependency on the parental resources and to limit their sources of alternative resources and, thus, to minimize the influence of such exogeneous variables as spousal relationships, economic independence from parents, and noninteraction with parents. These subsamples yielded a total of 458 usable questionnaires (227 males and 231 females).

Research Instrument

The questionnaire administered to the students participating in this research includes a modified version of Smith's (1970) parental power instrument measuring adolescent perceptions of parental power. Also included were a number of demographic items including the variables of sex, grade, religiosity, and birth order. Religiosity is operationalized as the frequency of church attendance following Reiss (1965) and birth order is operationalized as the number of older siblings.

The parental power instrument consists of 23 Likert-type questions presented twice (separately for father and mother) which tap the different parental power dimensions for each parent, with the demographic variable of occupational level of each parent used as one component indicator of parental expert power. Each item has a non-verbal seven-point response format from "strongly ageee" to "strongly disagree." In addition, cumulative indicators of adolescent perceptions of general maternal and paternal power were generated. A set of four questionnaire items, two positive and two negative in direction, was utilized to obtain measures of these variables except as indicated in the following delineation of power measures.

Parental outcome-control power is measured by focusing upon the parental control of economic resources, perceptions of decision-making in the parental unit, and the perceived strength of parental rewards and punishers. The specific items were:

1. Including food, housing, and all other expenses, about how much of your living expenses do your parents pay? (1= less than one-third, 4= between one-third and two-thirds, 7 = more than two-thirds).

2. When it comes to deciding when and how things are done in my family's home, my father/mother has the largest amount of influence.
3. In making decisions about how much money I get from my parents, my father/mother has the largest amount of influence.
4. My father/mother is the kind of person who can make you feel very good or make you feel bad, when he/she wants to, by the things he/she says and does.

Parental referent power is measured by the adolescent's predisposition to turn to the parent for guidance and advice. The specific items were:

1. When I have to make a decision, I sometimes consider what my father/mother would want me to do.
2. When I have a decision to make the ideas of my father/mother are worthy of careful consideration.
3. My father's/mother's opinion of my behavior would not mean so much to me as the opinions of my best friend.
4. If I were undecided about whether some particular behavior would be all right, I would make up my mind without considering what my father/mother might think.

Parental legitimate power is measured by the adolescent's perception of the parent's right or authority to exercise power, and parental expert power upon the adolescent's perceptions of parental competence and knowledge, in the heterosexual and educational areas of adolescent life. The areas of perceived legitimate and expert power are so broad that, following Smith (1970), it was felt necessary to ground these power variables into specific empirical domains. The heterosexual and educational domains were utilized under the assumption that these two areas

are of particular relevance to adolescents and thus provide strong indicators of perceived parental legitimate and expert power. Each of the four power subdimensions (hetersexual legitimate, educational legitimate, heterosexual expert, and educational expert) were measured by four items. For the legitimate and expert power values, then, the eight items for each were summed, with that value divided by two in order to make those values congruent with the other power variable measures. The specific questions for each subdimension were as follows:

Heterosexual legitimate power

1. The wishes of my father/mother should be given as much weight as those of anyone except myself, when it comes to making decisions about my relationship with members of the opposite sex.
2. My father/mother has a right to give me advice about my relationships with members of the opposite sex.
3. Since my relationships with members of the opposite sex will influence the remainder of my life through affecting what people think about me and who I marry, I should not give in to my father's/mother's opinions in this area when they differ from my own.
4. My father/mother has no right to influence any of my decisions about my relationships with members of the opposite sex.

Educational legitimate power

1. My father/mother has a right to give me advice about my education.
2. The wishes of my father/mother should be given as much weight as those of anyone except myself when it comes to making decisions about my education.

3. Since my education will influence the remainder of my life, I should not give in to my father's/mother's opinions in this area when they differ from my own.
4. My father/mother has no right to influence any of my decisions about my education.

Heterosexual expert power

1. My father/mother is able to give me useful advise about relationships with the opposite sex.
2. For an older person, my father/mother knows a great deal about the dating activities of young people.
3. My father's/mother's ideas about dating and relationships between the sexes are entirely out of date.
4. My father's/mother's ideas would not be very helpful to me in deciding what kind of person of the opposite sex I should and should not get involved with.

Educational expert power

1. From demographic data: How far did your father/mother go in school? (7= received a post graduate degree, 1= had less than 7 years of formal schooling).
2. My father/mother knows little or nothing about the names and activities of various academic fields and college departments.
3. My father/mother knows a great deal about the strong and weak points of various colleges and universities.
4. My father/mother is not able to tell me how to study effectively.

Each of the four parental power dimensions is operationalized, then, as the resulting values obtained by the summation of these Likert-type items.

Similarly, general parental power is operationalized as the summation of the four power dimensions, following Rollins and Thomas' (1975) discussion of the additive nature of the power dimensions. Each power variable is broken down and specified for both father and mother, with a possible range of 4-28 for each parent, and the general paternal and maternal power variable having a possible range of 16-112. The perceived distribution of power in the parental unit is also assessed by subtracting the mother's power score from the father's power score with parental power as well as with each of the power dimensions.

## Findings

Multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the separate effects of the independent variables of adolescents' sex, grade, religiosity, and birth order upon the dependent variables of perceived general maternal and paternal power, each of the differing power dimensions and the perceived parental power distribution in the family. The presented data include the means and standard deviations for the power variables, the unstandardized and standardized betas, F-values and the amount of variance explained in the dependent variables when the independent variables are considered together. The unstandardized and standardized coefficients provide information as to the importance of the independent variables across each maternal and paternal power category and within each category, respectively. However, the discussion of findings will consider the F-values as the major indicator of the impact of each adolescent characteristic upon the power variable in question.

Table 1 shows the relative influence of the independent variables upon the adolescents' overall perceptions of maternal and paternal power.

It is evidenced the sex of adolescent is a significant variable for perceived maternal power only (F=44.350). Thus, females perceive the mother to have more general power than do males. However, adolescent's religiosity is a strong positive determinant of both perceived maternal (F=40.006) and paternal power (F=32.458). No other variable is significantly related to these dependent variables. The adolescent variables also

(Table 1 about here)

explain considerably more variance in perceived maternal power ($R^2$=.184) than in perceived paternal power ($R^2$=.081). The mean values of these two variables demonstrate that there is little perceived differentiation in the degree of power of father and mother. The father is indicated to be perceived to have slightly more power. However, there is also a wider range of variation on this variable as compared to perceived maternal power, as indicated by the standard deviations.

Tables 2-5 provide parallel types of data, but with the dependent variables being the differing power dimensions which constitute the general parental power variables. Table 2 considers the perceived outcome - control power variable. Again, sex is a significant variable only for

(Table 2 about here)

power perceptions of the mother (F=7.707). Adolescent's grade in school is significantly related to the father's perceived outcome-control power and in a negative direction (F=8.261). However, these adolescent variables

account for only a very small amount of the variance in the dependent variables ($R^2$ = .021 for mothers, $R^2$ = .029 for fathers). The father is perceived to have somewhat more outcome-control power than the mother as indicated by the means for each variable.

Table 3 presents data for perceived referent power of each parent. The patterning with respect to sex is consistent with previous findings, being only significant for mothers (F = 23.968). Adolescent's degree of religiosity is significant for both parents (F = 18.844 for mothers, F = 14.639 for fathers). With this power dimension, birth order is seen to be a determinant variable for fathers (F = 7.870), with the direction being that the larger number of older siblings the adolescent has, the less referent power he/she perceives him to have. The independent variables explain considerably more variance in the maternal variable ($R^2$=.105)

(Table 3 about here)

than in the paternal variable ($R^2$ = .047). The distribution of referent power in the parental unit can be seen to be equalitarian, or basically the same for each parent.

Tables 4 and 5 demonstrate the relationships of the adolescent variables with perceived parental legitimate and expert power, respectively. In both cases, the patterning is basically the same and generally consistent with the previously presented data. Sex of adolescent is again significant for mothers but not fathers, with the F-value being 30.395 for perceived maternal legitimate power and 22.668 for perceived maternal expert power. Religiosity of adolescent is shown to be a major determinant variable for both parents with both types of power. The only major

differentiation in the two tables is that grade in school is again negatively related to perceptions of father's legitimate power (F = 7.591). With both power variables, the independent variables explain more variance in the dependent variable for mothers than fathers. Finally, with both perceived legitimate power and expert power, the mean power scores are generally similar for both parents, with the father perceived as having only slightly more power in these two dimensions.

(Tables 4 & 5 about here)

Table 6 more explicitly addresses the question of how these adolescent characteristics impact on adolescent perceptions of the distribution of power in the parental unit. The dependent variable, perceived parental power distribution, was calculated by subtracting the perceived power score of the mother from the perceived power score of the father in order to determine who is perceived to have the more power within each power category. It should be noted that this variable does not include differences in the levels of perceived power, but focuses only on how the independent variables influence who is perceived to have the greater amount of relative power. The relative levels of power can be ascertained from the mean values of the previous tables. The findings in Table 6 are consistent across categories. Sex of adolescent is significant in all cases, with females viewing the mother and father as having more similar amounts of power, that is, a more equalitarian power distribution, than do males. None of the other adolescent characteristics evidence any degree of strength. Further, the mean values consistently indicate that there is generally little differentiation of parental power between parents, though the father is always seen as having slightly more power.

The use of multiple regression analysis thus far has assumed that an additive model is sufficient to describe the relationships of interest. However, the question arises of the possible interaction of adolescent's sex with the variables of grade, religiosity and birth order in influencing these parental power perceptions. In other words, does an additive model best fit these data? Additional analyses were undertaken to locate possible interaction effects of sex with the other independent variables for each of the 15 dependent variables; that is, general perceived maternal and paternal power, the differing perceived maternal and paternal power dimensions, and the perceived power distribution in the parental unit. An examination for incremental increases in $R^2$ due to interaction effects evidenced that there were no significant interaction effects of sex with the other variable under consideration. Thus, an additive model is the "best fit" for the present data.

## Discussion

This research was formulated to locate those adolescent characteristics which impact on adolescent perceptions of the power of their fathers and mothers. The adolescent variables were sex, grade, religiosity and birth order. The first three variables were chosen because of existing research findings indicating their possible significance. Birth order was included because of its theoretical relevance, though it has been a largely neglected variable in family power research.

The patterning of findings was generally consistent. For the perceived general parental power variables, as well as within each power dimension, sex of adolescent was a determinant variable only for the perceived power of the mother, such that female adolescents perceived the

mother as having more power than did male adolescents. This relationship for females was strongest with mother's perceived legitimate power and weakest with her perceived outcome-control power. However, as in earlier research (McDonald, 1977b, 1979), the variable of perceived outcome-control power of either parent appears a rather isolated variable, with few indicated relationships with other variables. Perhaps, the largest economic nature of this variable is such that it is more straight-forward and less influenced by factors affecting interpretaions of perceptions of power. This could be evidenced by the fact that it is the only power dimension in which the father is seen as having considerably more power. The father is seen, then, as having more control of economic resources, decision-making, and more strongly utilizing rewards and punishers. This appears consistent with the notion that the father usually controls more of the instrumental and economic activities, or generally has major responsibility for the provider role, in the family. This is perceived similarly for both female and male adolescents regarding the parental unit.

Used as an indicator of traditionalism, religiosity was the most pervasive determinant variable for parental power perceptions. With the exception of perceived outcome-control power, religiosity systematically demonstrated a positive association with degree of power each parent was perceived to have. Congruent with earlier findings (McDonald, forthcoming), the internalization of traditional/religious norms by adolescents function in families to reinforce parental dominance or control. In contrast, however, this study evidences no significant impacts of religiosity on perceptions of the power distribution in the parental unit. Evidently, it apparently raises the level of perceived power of both parents in a similar manner.

Adolescents' grade in school does not appear as a systematically strong variable. Grades does have a negative impact on their perceptions of the outcome-control and legitimate power of the father. Since outcome-control power is conceptualized as the perceived strength of rewards and punishers, primarily of an economic nature, this finding provides support, perhaps, for the earlier findings (Smith, 1977) that older, more educated adolescents are more autonomous and independent and see themselves as having more alternative resources; economically and otherwise, than younger adolescents. Also, in this regard, as adolescents move through this life-stage they view the legitimacy, or normative authority, of the father to influence or control their attitudes and/or behaviors as lessening. However, this variable does not affect the perceived expert power of the father and has little influence on power perceptions of the mother.

Birth order of the adolescent is a significant determinant for father's perceived referent power only. Though not affecting his perceived legitimate or expert power, this finding - that the larger the number of older siblings the less the adolescent turns to the father for guidance and advice - does provide partial support for the argument posited that adolescents with older siblings turn, or "refer", to them for guidance, rather than the father. On the other hand, more siblings, whether older or younger, perhaps limit accessibility to the father and, thus, discourage the adolescent from looking to him for advice or guidance. Research is needed to provide further clarification of sibling power relationships in families and how such relationships influence parent-child power relationships.

With regard to adolescent characteristics affecting perceptions of the distribution of parental power, both generally and dimension-specific, sex of adolescent is the only significant variable of those included, and it is consistently strong. Thus, it appears that the consistent sex differentiation occurs because both males and females view the father as having basically the same amount of power while females perceive the mother to have considerably more power than do males. An examination of the mean values for each of the power variables by sex documents this differentiation. This indicates that males consistently see the father as having more power than the mother, while females view them as having basically the same amount of power. Evidently, sex-similarity of mother and adolescent daughter does play a significant role in the daughters perceptions of power in the parental dyad. Females consistently perceive the mother as having more power than do males, and they view the parental power structure as being more equalitarian than males, who perceive it as somewhat more father-dominant. It is interesting to speculate whether this patterning is specific to parent-child relationships or whether it is part of a larger perceptual phenomenon in which females generally perceive other females as more powerful than do males. It should be noted, that the variables included in this research generally explain only a small amount of the total variance across all power distributions dimensions.

The implications of these findings for the socialization and personality development of the adolescent in the family require further examination. Most obviously in this study, adolescent perceptions of the parental power structure are strongly influenced by sex of the adolescent, particularly in viewing the power of the mother, and the degree of adolescents' traditionalism,

as indicated by religiosity. In relating these findings to adolescents' socialization, it was demonstrated earlier (McDonald, 1977b), for instance, that parental identification by the adolescent is positively related to the adolescent's perception of parental power such that the adolescent tends to identify more with the parent who is perceived to have more power. This explanation was posited in contrast to sex-role theories of identification which argue that offspring tend to identify more with the same-sex parents. However, if sex differences exist in perceptions of parental power as has been indicated in this study, and these sex differences are found to be linked to sex-similarity of parent and offspring, then perhaps parental power perceptions are linked to sex-role socialization. Perceptions of parental power may be found to mediate between sex-similarity and parental identification. Alternatively, it could be that identification with parents influences perceptions of parental power.

Similarly, the increased power attributed to parents by "religious" adolescents in this study, argues for more elaborate investigations of the role of traditionalistic values of adolescents, obtained from religious teaching or elsewhere, upon adolescent perceptions of the family environment: particularly with regard to normative definition of authority and power in the family, and the impacts of these perception on adolescent socialization processes such as parental identification, compliance to parental rules, and deference to authority, generally, within and outside the family milieu.

TABLE 1

Multiple Regression Analysis of Sex, Grade, Religiosity and Birth Order of Adolescents with Perceived Maternal and Paternal Power

| Adolescent Variables | Perceived Maternal Power | | | Perceived Paternal Power | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | b | B | F | b | B | F |
| SEX[1] | 7.733 | .288 | 44.350* | .162 | .006 | .015 |
| GRADE | -.166 | -.017 | .160 | -.712 | -.067 | 2.218 |
| RELIGIOSITY | 3.372 | .273 | 40.006* | 3.492 | .261 | 32.458* |
| BIRTH ORDER | -.216 | -.025 | .347 | -.784 | -.084 | 3.450 |
| | $R^2$ = .184 | | | $R^2$ = .081 | | |
| | $\bar{x}$ = 76.252 | | | $\bar{x}$ = 78.995 | | |
| | SD = 13.440 | | | = 14.558 | | |

* $p < .05$

[1] Dummy variable: coded, 0 = male, 1 = female

TABLE 2

Multiple Regression Analysis of Sex, Grade, Religiosity and Birth Order of Adolescents with Perceived Maternal and Paternal Outcome-Control Power

| Adolescent Variables | Perceived Maternal Outcome-Control Power | | | Perceived Paternal Outcome-Control Power | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | b | B | F | b | B | F |
| SEX[1] | 1.085 | .131 | 7.707* | -.595 | -.071 | 2.289 |
| GRADE | -.069 | -.023 | .244 | -.405 | -.134 | 8.261* |
| RELIGIOSITY | .136 | .036 | .572 | .290 | .076 | 2.585 |
| BIRTH ORDER | .009 | .003 | .006 | -.008 | -.003 | .004 |
| | $R^2$ = .021 | | | $R^2$ = .029 | | |
| | $\bar{x}$ = 19.670 | | | $\bar{x}$ = 21.491 | | |
| | = 4.130 | | | = 4.172 | | |

* $p < .05$

[1] Dummy variable: coded, 0 = male; 1 = female.

TABLE 3

Multiple Regression Analysis of Sex, Grade, Religiosity and Birth Order of Adolescents with Perceived Maternal and Paternal Referent Power

| Adolescent Variables | Perceived Maternal Referent Power | | | Perceived Paternal Referent Power | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | b | B | F | b | B | F |
| SEX[1] | 2.250 | .222 | 23.968* | -.125 | -.012 | .066 |
| GRADE | -.165 | -.045 | 1.006 | -.044 | -.012 | .063 |
| RELIGIOSITY | .916 | .196 | 18.844* | .852 | .178 | 14.639* |
| BIRTH ORDER | -.139 | -.043 | .919 | -.430 | -.129 | 7.870* |
| | $R^2$ = .105 | | | $R^2$ = .047 | | |
| | $\bar{x}$ = 20.463 | | | $\bar{x}$ = 20.662 | | |
| | = 5.081 | | | = 5.194 | | |

* $p < .05$

[1] Dummy variable: coded, 0 = male; 1 = female

TABLE 4

Multiple Regression Analysis of Sex, Grade, Religiosity and Birth Order of Adolescents with Perceived Maternal and Paternal Legitimate Power

| Adolescent Variables | Perceived Maternal Legitimate Power | | | Perceived Paternal Legitimate Power | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | b | B | F | b | B | F |
| SEX[1] | 2.401 | .241 | 30.395* | .602 | .060 | 1.757 |
| GRADE | -.265 | -.073 | 2.879 | -.448 | -.124 | 7.591* |
| RELIGIOSITY | 1.264 | .276 | 39.937* | 1.220 | .226 | 34.300* |
| BIRTH ORDER | -.152 | .048 | 1.212 | -.196 | -.061 | 1.861 |
| | $R^2$ = .163 | | | $R^2$ = .100 | | |
| | $\bar{x}$ = 18.566 | | | $\bar{x}$ = 18.931 | | |
| | = 4.978 | | | = 5.003 | | |

* $p < .05$

[1] Dummy variable: coded, 0 = male; 1 = female

TABLE 5

Multiple Regression Analysis of Sex, Grade, Religiosity and Birth Order of Adolescents with Perceived Maternal and Paternal Expert Power

| Adolescent Variables | Perceived Maternal Expert Power | | | Perceived Paternal Expert Power | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | b | B | F | b | B | F |
| SEX[1] | 1.996 | .213 | 22.668* | .279 | .027 | .334 |
| GRADE | .002 | .001 | .000 | .184 | .049 | 1.134 |
| RELIGIOSITY | 1.056 | .245 | 30.125* | 1.129 | .236 | 25.892* |
| BIRTH ORDER | .065 | .022 | .242 | -.150 | -.045 | .959 |
| | $R^2$ = .125 | | | $R^2$ = .061 | | |
| | $\bar{x}$ = 17.524 | | | $\bar{x}$ = 17.911 | | |
| | = 4.686 | | | = 5.215 | | |

* $p < .05$

[1] Dummy variable: coded, 0 = male; 1 = female

TABLE 6

Multiple Regression Analysis of Sex, Grade, Religiosity and Birth Order of Adolescents with Perceived Parental Power Distribution (Paternal-Maternal) Variables

| Adolescent Variables | Perceived Parental Power Distribution | | | Perceived Parental Outcome-Control Power Distribution | | | Perceived Parental Referent Power Distribution | | | Perceived Parental Legitimate Power Distribution | | | Perceived Parental Expert Power Distribution | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | b | B | F | b | B | F | b | B | F | b | B | F | b | B | F |
| SEX[1] | -7.37 | -.294 | 41.725* | -1.680 | -.154 | 10.686* | -2.375 | -.218 | 22.091* | -1.700 | -.244 | 28.017* | -1.716 | -.203 | 18.883* |
| GRADE | -.546 | -.058 | 1.689 | -.335 | -.085 | 3.323 | -.209 | -.053 | 1.330 | -.183 | -.064 | 2.260 | .182 | .059 | 1.633 |
| RELIGIOSITY | .120 | .010 | .050 | .155 | .031 | .429 | -.064 | -.013 | .077 | -.043 | -.013 | .077 | -.073 | .019 | .161 |
| BIRTH ORDER | -.568 | -.069 | 2.343 | -.017 | -.005 | .001 | -.291 | -.083 | 3.313 | -.044 | -.019 | .169 | -.215 | -.079 | 2.962 |
| | $R^2$ = .099 | | | $R^2$ = .032 | | | $R^2$ = .063 | | | $R^2$ = .069 | | | $R^2$ = .049 | | |
| | $\bar{X}$ = 2.742 | | | $\bar{X}$ = 1.792 | | | $\bar{X}$ = .199 | | | $\bar{X}$ = .366 | | | $\bar{X}$ = .387 | | |
| | SD = 12.909 | | | SD = 5.463 | | | SD = 5.457 | | | SD = 3.685 | | | SD = 4.236 | | |

* $p < .05$

[1] Dummy variable: coded, 0 = male, 1 = female

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